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Summary record of the 1608th meeting
Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 6 July 2018, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Leinarte

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention (*continued*)

Ninth periodic report of Mexico (CEDAW/C/MEX/9; CEDAW/C/MEX/Q/9 and CEDAW/C/MEX/Q/9/Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Mexico took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Mr. Ruiz Cabañas** (Mexico), introducing his country's ninth periodic report (CEDAW/C/MEX/9), said that the recent elections had seen a record number of women candidates, which had led to increases of 17 per cent and 6 per cent in the number of women elected to the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies respectively. While those results demonstrated the significant progress made towards promoting women's political participation, further work was required to achieve gender equality in other areas of life. As a federal State with a complex governance structure, Mexico faced various challenges to the effective implementation and coordination of gender equality policies and the roll-out of programmes to combat gender-based violence against women. Several coordinating bodies had therefore been introduced with a view to harmonizing work in the field of women's rights, including the national system for equality between men and women and the national system to prevent, address, punish and eradicate violence against women.

3. In addition to the challenges associated with its complex federal system, as a multi-ethnic and multicultural nation, Mexico was also affected by considerable social and economic inequalities and experienced high levels of violence, crime and corruption as well as significant internal and international migratory flows. That combination of factors had contributed to discriminatory practices and negative gender stereotypes against women, particularly indigenous women, women with disabilities and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women. To combat those challenges, the Government had adopted several laws and policies aimed at breaking down patriarchal attitudes and promoting the rights of women, including the General Act on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence, the Federal Act on the Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination and the General Act on Equality between Women and Men. A gender perspective had also been incorporated into recently adopted legislation and gender mainstreaming had been introduced across all government departments.

4. The Government was committed to implementing the provisions of the Convention and had identified several key areas requiring attention. They included: allocating greater budgetary resources to special temporary measures; promoting women's participation in the labour market; supporting women's economic empowerment; further bolstering the national machinery for the advancement of women; strengthening the implementation and assessment of gender policy at all levels of government; increasing institutional coordination in the fight against violence against women; strengthening protection measures to support women victims; and ensuring women's access to justice. The Government was determined to intensify its efforts in that direction and to accelerate the achievement of de facto equality between women and men.

Articles 1 to 6

5. **Ms. Schulz**, stressing that the Congress rather than the federative entities should take the lead in implementing the Convention, asked whether the State party would give Congress the authority to enact laws on Convention-related issues in order to prevent federative entities from legislating on those matters and ensure the adoption of harmonized legislation addressing systemic and intersectional discrimination and containing consistent definitions and sanctions for, inter alia, femicide, enforced disappearances of women and girls, abortion, human trafficking and gender-based violence that would guarantee protection for the rights of women throughout the country. She would also welcome information regarding the efforts made to accelerate and strengthen the implementation of legislation and policies aimed at promoting gender equality and combating gender-based

violence, including whether a plan of action prioritizing the implementation of the most important policy instruments had been established.

6. Noting the increasing violence and high level of stigmatization facing women journalists and human rights defenders, she wished to know whether the federal mechanism to protect human rights defenders and journalists would adopt a gender-specific approach to the risks faced by such women and publish a map detailing the location of attacks so as to combat such offences more effectively. It would be particularly interesting to learn whether the Government intended to reinstate the budget allocated to the mechanism so that it could fulfil its mandate and protect women across the country more effectively, specifically indigenous women human rights defenders.

7. Regarding access to justice, she asked whether action would be taken to amend the Federal Act on General Transparency and Access to Public Information so as to make all court rulings readily available to the public. She also wondered whether the protocol on issuing gender-sensitive judgments had been implemented by all justice institutions at all levels and whether all stakeholders in the justice system had received mandatory training on women's rights. Further information on the steps taken to ensure the access of indigenous women to federal and state justice systems and to strengthen the capacity of indigenous justice mechanisms to respect women's rights would also be welcome in that context. It would be particularly helpful to know what efforts had been made to bolster the operation of the 35 justice centres in order to reduce disparities in the consistency and quality of services they provided, and to evaluate the recently introduced accusatorial system to assess whether it had reduced impunity for crimes against women and lowered the number of women in pre- and post-trial detention. Lastly, she wished to know what steps would be taken to restrict the pretrial detention of women to exceptional cases only; to eliminate acts of torture against women, specifically the use of sexual torture to obtain forced confessions from women accused of drug offences; and to improve the overall detention conditions of women.

8. **Ms. Gastélum Bajo** (Mexico) said that, while progress in some areas had been slower than desired, the Government remained committed to upholding the rights of women and promoting gender equality and had prioritized the elimination of violence against women, particularly femicide. Numerous measures had been adopted to that end, including the introduction of protection orders, the development of a public register of crimes committed against women, the establishment of a gender violence alert mechanism and the launch of various awareness-raising campaigns.

9. **Mr. Ruiz Cabañas** (Mexico) said that Mexico was committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels of government and that the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 5, which was to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, were key criteria in all federal budgets. The next Administration, which would take power at the end of 2018, would certainly maintain that commitment. To follow up on implementation of the 2030 Agenda, a national council that was chaired by the President of the Republic and included representatives of civil society had been established, together with 20 state-level councils.

10. **Mr. Avante Juárez** (Mexico) said that, to enhance protection for journalists and human rights workers, the Government had developed a new risk evaluation system that took account of specific factors such as gender, vulnerability, discrimination and the relationship between at-risk persons and their aggressors. The new system would be trialled in the near future and was expected to be adopted by the Government in August 2018. The federal mechanism to protect human rights defenders and journalists had received State funding of Mex$ 200 million for 2018, which was more than it had been allocated in all previous years combined. The mechanism now also benefited from a 24-hour mapping system for monitoring risks and incidents of violence that had been recognized for its technological innovation.

11. **Mr. Robledo Flores** (Mexico) said that the new criminal justice system in Mexico took account of the intercultural and multilingual nature of the indigenous population and also of gender perspectives. It also now offered a special public defence service for indigenous peoples. Other measures introduced to guarantee access to justice for

indigenous women included an assistance programme that provided legal aid and translation from and into indigenous languages during proceedings. Since 2013, 5,000 people, including almost 500 women, had benefited from that programme. Since article 2 of the Constitution of Mexico allowed indigenous Mexicans to resolve conflicts within their own communities, local-level indigenous conflict resolution procedures could be used in preference to proceedings under national law.

12. **Ms. Luna Ramos** (Mexico) said that all rulings handed down by the Supreme Court of Mexico, the Council of the Federal Judiciary and the Electoral Tribunal of the Federal Judiciary were made publicly available: the Council of the Federal Judiciary had issued an express communication to that effect. However, only 47 per cent of rulings handed down by local courts were made publicly available. Although the Federal Act on Transparency and Access to Public Information restricted publication of rulings to those of national interest only, the courts had not applied that restriction. The Council of the Federal Judiciary made rulings available to the public via two separate Internet sites.

13. **Mr. Avante Juárez** (Mexico), acknowledging that much remained to be done to improve conditions for women in detention, said that some progress had been made in reducing overcrowding in women's prisons, the average prison occupancy rate having fallen from 130 per cent in 2013 to 110 per cent at present. In addition, a programme promoting non-custodial penalties for indigenous women had been established; around 500 women had been released from prison since 2013; and legal advice had been provided to over 26,000 women. A separate programme designed to support children living in detention was in the development stage and was already being piloted. The prison authorities were also endeavouring to work more closely with the health authorities in order to improve the psychological and medical care provided to women in detention; at present, the prison service had only 90 psychological support staff for a total of 130 detention centres.

14. **Ms. Schulz**, noting that her question regarding the need to give Congress the authority to enact laws on Convention-related issues remained unanswered, said that the underlying rationale was to ensure a unified legal system, without disparities between the state and federal levels. Despite the responses given, she remained concerned that rulings issued by state-level courts were not being published. In some state courts, no rulings had apparently been made public for over two years.

15. Noting that many women were in detention for drug-related offences and almost all of them were being held for non-violent offences, she asked whether the State party was ready to avail itself of locally implemented non-custodial solutions that allowed women to maintain links with their families and fulfil their childcare responsibilities. She would also be grateful for an explanation as to how the authorities intended to allay indigenous women's lack of trust in the legal system and how the practical difficulties that impeded their access to justice, such as the distance they might need to travel to attend court and the expenses they might incur, could be overcome.

16. **Ms. Manalo** said that she would like to know whether the Government had opened up recruitment to the land, sea and air branches of the armed forces to women and, if not, whether it intended to do so.

17. **Ms. Arocha Domínguez** asked whether the Government had considered the possibility of developing a strategy for ensuring women's contribution to peace and security negotiations and operations and what measures it had taken to ensure that gender was taken into account when dealing with situations of internal forced displacement.

18. **Ms. Gastélum Bajo** (Mexico) said that the Government wished to establish a unified legal system and that steps had been taken in that direction, the laws on torture and enforced disappearances and the General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents Rights, all of which took precedence over state legislation, being notable cases in point. However, although a single consolidated code of criminal procedure had been established, a single criminal code, that encompassed issues including abortion, equal marriage, family rights and adoption, was still lacking. That lacuna needed to be filled as a matter of urgency.

19. **Mr. Ruiz Cabañas** (Mexico) said that the General Act on the Prevention, Investigation and Punishment of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment Act had come into force in 2017. A federal law on enforced disappearances had also been drafted, with the participation of civil society and family members of disappeared persons and with United Nations assistance, to ensure alignment with international standards. Although those laws did not refer specifically to women, they obviously served to enhance women's rights.

20. **Ms. Luna Ramos** (Mexico) said that non-publication of judicial rulings was a problem in local courts only. Those courts were independent, and organizational or budgetary problems might impede publication. It would be helpful to the Government if the Committee could make a specific recommendation in its concluding observations that all court rulings issued in Mexico should be made public.

21. **Mr. Avante Juárez** (Mexico) said that Mexico gave due importance to the issue of pretrial detention, which should be an exception rather than the rule. Efforts were being made to ensure that women in pretrial detention were held close to their homes and had access to their children and families. The new criminal justice system would allow Mexico to make progress in those areas.

22. **Mr. Lara Cabrera** (Mexico) said that the Government was working with civil society to ascertain the number of women held in pretrial detention for non-violent offences and assess their situation. The aim was to put forward public policy proposals that took account of the particular vulnerability of women in detention, drawing on past experience of the use of non-custodial sentences in Mexico.

23. **Mr. Ruiz Cabañas** (Mexico) said that the Outcome Document of the 2016 United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem supported a proposal tabled by Mexico in recommending that States should aim to use measures other than custodial sentences. The Government of Mexico had found the Outcome Document to be a highly useful resource for promoting alternative penalties, and although an extensive national programme of non-custodial measures had yet to be developed, the authorities were working to that end.

24. **Mr. Robledo Flores** (Mexico) said that the distrust in federal and state justice felt by indigenous people was understandable given that for many years the legal system had failed to take account of multilingualism, indigenous culture or even gender perspectives. However, the Government was endeavouring to gain the trust of indigenous women with various new programmes, including a conditional release programme under which support was provided by indigenous lawyers and interpreters; a special defence programme intended to ensure that no provision of domestic laws encroached upon the human rights of indigenous women; and a third programme under which ongoing training was provided to members of the judiciary to increase their knowledge of indigenous culture, language and customs.

25. **Ms. Herrerías** (Mexico) said that other programmes in place included an agreement with the National Institute of Indigenous Languages to ensure that all indigenous women had access to an interpreter who spoke their language and the "*Repensar*" (Rethink) crime prevention programme intended to prevent prison admissions for certain ex officio offences such as possessing a weapon and in the case of juveniles, any non-serious offence. The programme was currently operating in 11 states but the Government hoped to expand it nationwide. Under the programme, offenders received six months of behavioural therapy and guidance towards education and vocational training.

26. **Ms. Bethel**, noting that all 32 federative entities had systems for the advancement of women and that there were over 500 municipal branch offices, asked how the work of the municipal offices could be better harmonized with the activities of the federative entities and the national machinery responsible for implementing gender equality policy, which itself consisted of three separate mechanisms. She would appreciate precise details of the strategic agenda of each mechanism, as well as information about their efficacy and any in-built evaluation mechanisms. She wondered how the three mechanisms' separate mandates and activities were coordinated and what measures the Government might take to

streamline their strategic agendas so that the needs of women, and especially rural and indigenous women, could be met more efficiently.

27. She was interested to learn how the national gender equality policy was implemented at the federal, state and municipal levels and whether the role of the coordinating entity, the National Institute for Women (Inmujeres), could be enhanced with a view to improving the delivery of programmes. The Committee was concerned that neither Inmujeres nor the other gender equality mechanisms appeared to have been provided with sufficient resources. It would therefore be grateful for details of any plans for increased capacity-building, staff training and resource allocation. With less than 1 per cent of the federal budget apparently being assigned to the implementation of gender equality programmes and policies, it would be useful to know whether the federative entities and municipalities had their own gender budgets, and, if so, whether their budget allocations were adequate. Lastly, she asked whether staff responsible for data collection and collation would receive the training necessary to allow them to analyse the data properly and thus produce statistics that provided a better basis for policy decisions at the federal, state and municipal levels.

28. **Ms. Eghobamien-Mshelia** asked whether the various mechanisms and programmes for women's advancement mentioned in paragraphs 30 to 37 of the periodic report were temporary special measures, long-standing or ad hoc initiatives. Similarly, she would like clarification as to whether the policies and strategies outlined in paragraphs 38 to 57 were temporary special measures. Information about any other programmes or strategies designed to redress inequalities between men and women, especially in the case of indigenous, poor or migrant women, would also be useful. She would particularly welcome details of the results achieved under the 2013–2018 PROIGUALDAD affirmative action framework, and the lessons learned. She wondered how successful the policies implemented within that framework were considered to have been, given, for example, that, although a targeted programme had been running from 2013 to 2016, only 32 per cent of missing women and girls had been located in that period. With that in mind, she suggested that the Government should reassess its use of temporary special measures and ensure that its programmes allowed space for the constant review of performance and targets. Without such reviews, the benefits for women and children could not be properly evaluated.

29. **Mr. Ruiz Cabañas** (Mexico) said that a national council had been created to oversee progress on the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda and public meetings had been convened to garner national and international expertise and gain input from civil society on how best to achieve the related targets. In that regard, a series of recommendations had been adopted and disseminated through the National Conference of Governors, emphasizing the fact that meeting the Sustainable Development Goals was a State responsibility and not a commitment applicable only to the current Administration. The Government had also taken the step of amending its federal budgets to ensure that dedicated funding was in place to fulfil those development targets.

30. **Ms. Eternod Arámburu** (Mexico) said that efforts had been made to increase the proportion of state budgets allocated to the promotion of gender equality and ensure that the gender perspective was incorporated into all policies and programmes. Indicators had been created to track progress in that regard and transparency had been improved through the establishment of a monitoring system. It was a requirement that the operating regulations of all programmes took the gender dimension into account and that a programme's expected benefits for women and men alike were explicitly stated. Lastly, funding for affirmative action measures aimed at reducing gender inequality had seen a significant increase.

31. **Ms. Herrerías** (Mexico) said that various initiatives were in operation across the country to aid in the search for missing women and girls. The Amber Alert Mexico programme had been effective in around 65 per cent of cases, with particular success in finding missing girls and teenagers. The Attorney General's Office had a similar scheme in place, which it used to disseminate information and photographs of missing persons to local and national media organizations.

32. **Ms. Quiroga Quiroga** (Mexico) said that the Alba Protocol, which had been established specifically to address disappearances of women and girls, was fully operational

in eight of the country's federative entities and was implemented through the establishment of technical committees and with the active participation of civil society.

33. **Mr. Robledo Flores** (Mexico) said that efforts to promote women's empowerment included initiatives to foster the economic independence of indigenous women, such as the programme to improve indigenous production and productivity, which had had a positive impact on some 80,000 indigenous women and their wider communities. Special measures had also been taken to guarantee access to education for the 37,000 indigenous children who were currently living in shelters.

34. **Ms. Eghobamien-Mshelia** said that she would be interested to know what the outcome of the various programmes and temporary special measures had been and whether the beneficiaries themselves had considered them to be effective.

35. **Mr. Robledo Flores** (Mexico) said that programmes were evaluated according to the extent to which they had achieved their intended objective, such as reducing poverty among the indigenous population. Efforts were being made, including by amending public policies, to foster indigenous women's participation and leadership in the development of projects in order to incorporate gender and intercultural perspectives and ensure that programmes reflected the actual needs of indigenous communities. For that purpose, a project to disseminate relevant information, promote women's and girls' rights and provide training was currently in the pipeline.

36. **Ms. Eternod Arámburu** (Mexico) said that, in addition to the various temporary special measures that were implemented throughout the country's 32 federative entities, the National Council for the Prevention of Discrimination and the Ministry of the Public Service had issued guidelines to foster gender equality in social oversight bodies and in federal and social development programmes. For instance, temporary special measures had successfully been used in recruitment processes to accelerate gender parity in the Attorney General's Office.

37. **Ms. Bethel** said reports indicated that, although there was an abundance of data available, it was poorly managed and thus underused in policy formulation. She therefore wished to know what steps had been taken to improve data management and provide training in order to make better use of the data available. She would also like to know whether the equality legislation enacted in the 32 federative entities was identical; and, if so, whether it contained an anti-discrimination clause that was in line with the Convention.

38. **Ms. Eternod Arámburu** (Mexico) said that the national machinery for the advancement of women had placed an emphasis on developing strategies and enhancing capacity-building measures in order to ensure that mechanisms and personnel at the state and municipal levels better understood and made appropriate use of data. As regards gender equality legislation, while the laws implemented by the different federative entities contained slight differences, they all contained a specific provision on combating discrimination against women.

39. **Ms. Gastélum Bajo** (Mexico) said that, since women were generally the main participants of social programmes, such as the PROSPERA social inclusion programme to combat poverty, they were often either specifically formulated with women participants in mind or included measures aimed solely at women. Such projects therefore usually took the particular needs of women, such as health care, into account.

40. **Mr. Rochín del Rincón** (Mexico) said that women beneficiaries had been the main recipients of compensation and support granted by the Fund for Aid, Assistance and Comprehensive Reparation in respect of missing persons. In particular, the Fund had issued two recent resolutions, awarding a total of US$ 500,000 to six women family members of disappeared victims. In most cases, the goal of comprehensive reparation was to empower victims, promote their autonomy and enable them to rebuild their lives.

41. **Ms. Acosta Vargas** said that she wished to know what measures were envisaged to ensure full respect for gender equality legislation designed to eliminate the pervasive, sexist stereotypes of women disseminated in the mass media. Similarly, she wondered what was being done to encourage a national dialogue and foster cooperation between politicians, advertising companies and the traditional and online media in combating social tolerance of

violence against women. Noting that stereotypes also persisted in the justice system, she asked whether the public could submit complaints against officials in that regard and, if so, whether any sanctions had been imposed as a result.

42. Referring to the recommendations made by the Committee in its communication No. 75/2014 (CEDAW/C/67/D/75/2014), which concerned Pilar Arguello Trujillo, who had been a victim of femicide, she said she welcomed the fact that the State party was reopening the case and hoped that other cases that had been closed without identifying the perpetrator or delivering justice to the families would also be re-examined. She wondered, however, why the numerous laws and protocols introduced to combat violence against women and femicide had failed to be effective. She would like to know what measures had been taken or were envisaged to strengthen and increase funding for gender violence alert mechanisms; improve support for shelters for women victims of violence and expand their coverage to all areas where violence against women had been recorded; and increase the number of justice centres around the country, while taking account of the experience of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in the field. Lastly, she asked whether the families of missing persons were involved in searches for their loved ones and whether they received adequate support and protection in order to prevent them from being revictimized.

43. **Ms. Jahan** said that, despite its efforts, Mexico remained a major hotspot for human trafficking. In particular, the trafficking of women and girls for the purposes of labour or sexual exploitation was alarming. In addition, undocumented migrants transiting through the country were in an especially vulnerable situation owing to their lack of status, which left them without any effective protection. She wished to know what was being done to improve the victim identification capabilities of border agents, law enforcement officers and labour inspectors; conduct gender-sensitive investigations of cases of human trafficking and forced prostitution and punish the perpetrators; combat impunity by investigating and prosecuting public officials complicit in human trafficking and the sexual exploitation of women; and increase the number of dedicated shelters for women victims. She also wondered whether the State party had considered developing a code of conduct with technology companies so as to prevent online platforms from being used to promote sex tourism.

44. She would like to know what initiatives had been undertaken by the State party, including by creating task forces, to combat the increasing phenomenon of disappearances of women and teenage girls, which was so often linked to child pornography and human trafficking committed by organized criminal gangs. In that connection, since the link between drug trafficking and migrant smuggling by criminal gangs had become increasingly evident, she asked what action had been taken to investigate and prevent trafficking and organized crime along migrant routes. Information on measures to strengthen agreements with neighbouring countries for cooperation in tackling the cross-border exploitation of women and girls would also be appreciated. Lastly, she asked what measures were in place or envisaged to reduce demand for prostitution, help women in prostitution to find alternative livelihoods and review federal legislation to ensure that the definition of trafficking of persons was in line with the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the supported United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (the Trafficking in Persons Protocol).

45. **Mr. Ruiz Cabañas** (Mexico) said that the role of the media in perpetuating stereotypes was undeniable. However, the influence of the traditional media, including television, was waning: instead, young people used social networks and online companies for their news and entertainment. Even so, it was difficult to reconcile the need to eliminate stereotypes and prevent the glorification of criminality in the media with the right to freedom of expression.

46. **Ms. Luna Ramos** (Mexico) said that, regarding the case of Pilar Arguello Trujillo, the authorities were in the process of reopening the investigation, in line with the recommendations of the Committee. Since Mexico was a federal state, the criminalization of femicide had been a gradual process. Cases involving femicide were, however, now being dealt with by the local courts. Most notably, in 2013, the Supreme Court had issued a

landmark decision, not only ruling that the killing of Mariana Lima Buendía in 2010 should be reopened but also providing criteria for how future cases involving violent deaths of women should be investigated to ensure that justice was done.

47. **Ms. Herrerías** (Mexico) said that there were thousands of missing women in Mexico and nearly 10,000 cases were currently formally registered. However, in the case of enforced disappearances, victims' families often chose not to make a formal report for fear of reprisals. The authorities were working hard to resolve all cases and over the past few months had collected over 8,000 DNA samples, which were being used to build up a centralized genetic databank through which information could be exchanged. The standardized protocols for searching for missing persons and investigating enforced disappearances, which had been developed in consultation with the families, provided for relatives to be involved in searches and investigations. Progress had also been made in the development of guidelines for the preservation of bodies and human remains; the creation of a national register for unidentified bodies and a national forensic DNA databank; and the launch of a national programme for forensic exhumations. The Government was working with all federative entities and met periodically with the special prosecution units responsible for disappeared persons. Almost half of all special prosecutor's offices had special units of that kind.

48. Special prosecutors for trafficking in persons had been appointed in almost 90 per cent of federative entities and meetings were held regularly to ensure coordination between them. A special unit responsible for investigating crimes against migrants had been set up within the Attorney General's Office and was currently dealing with some 96 cases of migrant women victims of crime. In conjunction with civil society, the Government was also working to build an overseas support mechanism through which family members in other countries could contact the relevant consulates and contribute to ongoing searches and investigations.

49. **Ms. Eternod Arámburu** (Mexico) said that the Government faced major challenges in ensuring protection for sex workers' rights, especially since public opinion in that area was divided: some regarded sex work as a job, but for others it was exploitation. Despite the challenges, the Government endeavoured to identify all sex workers who might be victims of trafficking while at the same time guaranteeing respect for their rights.

50. **Mr. Ruiz Cabañas** (Mexico), providing a brief history of the drugs trade and organized crime in Mexico, said that increased maritime enforcement in the 1990s had diverted drug trafficking flows to the United States of America overland through Mexico. That change had had devastating effects for the country, as organized criminal gangs increasingly turned their attention to the cocaine trade. The situation had subsequently been compounded by the expiry of the United States Public Safety and Recreational Firearms Use Protection Act in 2004 and the establishment of 9,000 armouries on the United States side of the border with Mexico, which had given new economic and arms power to the criminal gangs. The Government had done its best in the face of a situation not of its making, which would have been graver still without existing laws. Somewhat later, a new problem had arisen: although the historical trend of Mexican nationals migrating to the United States of America was abating and more and more Mexicans were choosing to return home, security conditions and climate change, among other factors, had increased migratory flows from Central America through Mexico, as migrants from the South attempted to reach the North. To address that new problem, talks had been initiated with the authorities of Central American countries in the hope of formulating a regional solution. In addition, the Government was actively involved in the development of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration.

51. **Ms. Acosta Vargas** said that the Committee recognized the challenges that the State party faced, particularly in dealing with organized crime. However, despite the challenges, the wherewithal for improvements could always be found. For example, as the judicial system was sometimes slow to respond, could greater efforts not be made to establish a single national register of missing or disappeared persons that would facilitate and accelerate search and investigation? In addition, she wondered whether a mechanism was in place whereby persons could file complaints against police and judicial officers believed to

have failed in their duties; and, if so, what steps were taken to ensure that complaints were acted upon and what sanctions were imposed.

52. **Ms. Jahan** asked what specific measures were being taken to address the reportedly deadly human trafficking business playing out along the border between the United States of America and Mexico. In the light of reports of the abduction of Mexican babies and children for illegal adoption by families in North America and Western Europe, she asked what safeguards against such offences were incorporated in national adoption policies.

53. **Ms. Arocha Domínguez** asked why the State party had refused to allow a visit from representatives of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances, given its exemplary past record in accepting visits from United Nations bodies.

54. **Mr. Ruiz Cabañas** (Mexico), responding to Ms. Acosta Varga's observations, said that the Government always sought to learn from the Committee and to make progress wherever possible. It was that desire for progress that had led to enactment of the General Act on the Enforced Disappearance of Persons, Disappearances Perpetrated by Individuals and the National Missing Persons System in January 2018. The Act had been developed with the assistance of international experts and provided for the establishment of a centralized national register of missing and disappeared persons, a national search commission and local committees to coordinate searches between states, among other mechanisms. He hoped to be able to report that the Act had been successful when Mexico next appeared before the Committee.

55. **Ms. Herrerías** (Mexico) said that the National Migration Institute, in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration, had developed a protocol for the detection, identification and care of migrant victims and/or potential victims of trafficking in Mexico. In addition, in 2016, the Interministerial Commission for the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Crimes of Human Trafficking and the Protection and Assistance of Trafficking Victims had signed an agreement with the International Organization for Migration to assist federative entities in developing their own protocols on trafficking. Nearly all federative entities had now issued such protocols. Training on trafficking in persons was provided for public servants. The bilateral agreements to combat trafficking that had been concluded with the United States of America ensured coordination between the various entities involved during investigations. The National Public Security Council had formulated an agreement to build the capacities of the special prosecution units responsible for trafficking in persons, and the unit of the Attorney General's Office responsible for investigating crimes against migrants worked closely with those units at the federal level.

56. **Mr. Arellano Cuán** (Mexico) said that an administrative procedure for the submission of complaints of non-compliance with legal obligations on the part of public servants had been established in 2015. Individuals were able to file complaints either in person or anonymously, by telephone, email or chat function. The sanctions imposed included fines and/or the employee's temporary or permanent removal from post. Criminal complaints could also be filed, in which case criminal investigations were instituted and the possible sanctions included imprisonment as well as fines.

57. **Ms. Quiroga Quiroga** (Mexico) said that a monitoring system was in place to prevent illegal child adoption. Specific border control measures had also been established in cooperation with the National Migration Institute. Whenever a case of abduction or illegal adoption was detected, the International Criminal Police Organization was immediately alerted. Cases were investigated by the Attorney General's Office and the office of the special prosecutor responsible for cases of trafficking in persons.

58. **Ms. Millán Velázquez** (Mexico) said that a bill on international child adoption had been approved by the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents and was currently before Congress.

59. **Mr. Ruiz Cabañas** (Mexico) said that the National Human Rights Commission was the body competent to receive complaints concerning violations committed by public servants. Once the alleged offence had been investigated, the Commission issued recommendations that were binding in effect.

60. The Government had not ruled out the possibility of ratifying the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. However, it had prioritized the development of an effective system for investigating and punishing enforced disappearances over a visit from representatives of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances, whose work, through vital, was not a substitute for a national system.

61. **Mr. Beltrán Benites** (Mexico) said that efforts were being made to ensure women's inclusion in the armed forces, particularly in high-ranking posts, and in combative, operational and specialist positions, by harmonizing and strengthening laws, using gender-neutral language. Mechanisms in place to prevent discrimination and violence against women in the army included the Observatory for Gender Equality in the Armed Forces. A total of US$ 18 million had been invested in new facilities and services, while US$ 4 million had been allocated to gender equality awareness-raising and training for military officers.

62. **Ms. Gastélum Bajo** (Mexico) said that the situation of persons who had been internally displaced due to organized criminal activities was a very serious matter that was currently subject to intense debate and required urgent attention. Unfortunately, despite two reforms and considerable efforts, the General Victims Act still did not recognize the concept of internal displacement adequately.

63. **Mr. Rochín del Rincón** (Mexico) said that the 2017 reform of the General Victims Act did, however, recognize the particularly vulnerable situation of internally displaced persons and the need for a specialized and gender-sensitive response to their situation. Around half of the more than 530 current victims of internal displacement were women. Funding of over US$ 41,000 had been approved to cover support and assistance measures via 23 separate resolutions and significant financial reparation had been awarded to one particular victim. There was one national shelter for forcibly internally displaced persons.

64. **Ms. Manalo** said that all progress on women's inclusion in the armed forces should be reflected in information provided to the Committee in the next reporting period.

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65. **Ms. Eghobamien-Mshelia** said that she was concerned about the lack of data that hampered policymaking on women's political participation. She would like to know how the State party planned to remove barriers to women's political participation and integrate marginalized groups of women into political life as a means to reduce discrimination and exclusion. The lack of a federal-level legal framework to outlaw political violence against women and enforce existing electoral laws were matters of grave concern, given the rise in political violence against women, which had included several murders in recent months. She asked whether the delegation could confirm that the protocol for responding to political violence against women, which had been used as a basis for filing 141 complaints and issuing eight judgments in 2015 and 2016, and the guide for submitting complaints of political violence against women, both of which were referred to in the report, were being duly implemented and were accessible to women of all categories; and whether the protection they provided was sufficient to encourage women to participate freely in politics. Lastly, she would like to know the degree of compliance with the General Act on Electoral Institutions and Procedures and the General Act on Political Parties that had been achieved, and whether those laws had helped to mitigate women's political exclusion.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.